

In August 2014, the Union of Forces of Resistance (UFR), a rebel coalition that had ended its armed rebellion against the government in 2010, repeated threats that it could again take up arms. This, in combination with civil unrest and a massive influx of refugees from Central African Republic (CAR) throughout the year, contributed to instability in 2014.

Chad maintained some troops in Mali after beginning to withdraw in May 2013. Chad had originally sent 2,000 troops in early 2013 to help drive out Islamist fighters as part of an intervention spearheaded by France, Déby's longtime ally. In September 2014, after five of its soldiers were killed, Chad accused the UN mission in Mali of neglect.

In March 2014, Chadian soldiers were accused of human rights abuses in CAR, where Chad has contributed substantially to an African Union peacekeeping force. President Déby claimed that the accusations were efforts to tarnish the country's reputation, and ordered a full withdrawal of its troops. Chad began to play an important role in France's Opération Barkhane, which aims to fight the Islamist threat in the Sahel. Opposition actors, who say that foreign countries are propping up President Déby and choosing regional stability over the internal politics of Chad, have criticized this decision.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 450,000 refugees reside in Chad—mainly from Sudan, CAR, and Nigeria. In addition, more than 120,000 Chadians have been repatriated from CAR.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

### **Political Rights: 5 / 40 [Key]**

#### **A. Electoral Process: 3 / 12**

Chad has never experienced a free and fair transfer of power through elections. Déby, a former military commander, ousted dictator Hissène Habré in 1990, and has won four presidential elections since. The president is elected for five-year terms, and a 2005 constitutional amendment abolished term limits. The executive branch dominates the judicial and legislative branches, and the president appoints the prime minister.

The unicameral National Assembly consists of 188 members elected for four-year terms. Legislative elections originally due in 2006 were repeatedly postponed due to insufficient equipment and staffing, as well as delays in voter registration. When they finally took place in February 2011, Déby's Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS) party won 117 seats and 14 more went to Déby's allies, leading to an absolute majority for the president. The most successful opposition party won only 10 seats. The European Union praised the peaceful and fair conduct of the elections, despite some logistical problems. However, the opposition claimed that irregularities occurred both before the vote—due to the government's media dominance and the use of state resources to benefit the ruling party—and during the elections, including issues with electoral rolls and voter registration cards. It also pointed to the Independent Electoral Commission's official results page, which showed irregularities. A request by opposition parties to reprint voter registration cards was rejected.

Citing irregularities before and during the parliamentary elections, the three main opposition candidates

boycotted the presidential poll in April 2011, which Déby won with 89 percent of the vote.

## **B. Political Pluralism and Participation: 1 / 16**

More than 70 political parties operate in Chad, though a number of them were created by the government to divide the opposition. Only the ruling MPS has significant influence.

The government claimed to have foiled a coup following two separate clashes in May 2013, at a military barracks and in a residential neighborhood in the capital, in which several people were killed. In the aftermath of the fighting, four members of parliament—two from the ruling party and two from the opposition—were arrested and charged with conspiracy; two were provisionally released later in the month and the others in September. Many observers have stated that these arrests were politically motivated in order to crack down on government critics; some have also questioned whether the coup may have been staged for this purpose. The arrests appeared to violate the immunity legally guaranteed to the country's lawmakers; only the National Assembly can remove a member's immunity, and it had not done so in these cases. In February 2014, the charges against all four were dismissed.

Despite rivalries within Déby's northeastern Zaghawa ethnic group, members of that and other northern ethnic groups continue to control Chad's political and economic systems, causing resentment among the country's more than 200 other ethnic groups. Although they comprise about 40 percent of the population, Christians in the south have been excluded from political power for more than 20 years. Déby's tight control as well as political instability in the border regions further exacerbate obstacles to Christians' political participation.

## **C. Functioning of Government: 1 / 12**

According to international monitors, corruption is endemic in Chad and prevails at all levels of government, from the presidential cabinet to the police force and local bureaucracy. Despite becoming an oil producer in 2003, Chad remains one of the world's poorest nations; Chad ranked 184 out of 187 states on the 2014 Human Development Index. Weaknesses in revenue management and oversight facilitate the diversion of oil revenues from national development projects to private interests and growing military expenditures, and fighting corruption has not been a government priority. High-profile journalists, labor leaders, and religious figures have faced harsh reprisal for their criticisms of Chad's corruption, including arrest, prosecution, and expulsion from the country. Chad was ranked 163 out of 175 countries and territories surveyed in Transparency International's 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index.

In January 2014, an audio recording surfaced featuring Ahmat Bachir, President Déby's chief of staff, soliciting money from former justice minister Jean-Bernard Padaré. In March, Padaré was arrested and charged with embezzling funds that he allegedly then offered to Bachir. Bachir was relieved of his duties as chief of staff but never arrested. According to Chad's anticorruption minister, the audio recording was not sufficient evidence to bring charges against Bachir, and the case against Padaré was based on other evidence. Nevertheless, the government faced accusations of political persecution. The case against Padaré remained pending at year's end.

## **Civil Liberties: 16 / 60**

## **D. Freedom of Expression and Belief: 7 / 16**

The constitution provides for freedom of the press and expression. However, both are severely restricted, and self-censorship is common. Broadcast media are controlled by the state. The High Council of Communication (HCC) exerts control over most content on the radio—the most important means of mass communication—and while there are roughly a dozen private stations, they face high licensing fees and the threat of closure for critical coverage. Reporting on the activities of rebels or any other information that could harm national unity has been banned since 2008. A small number of private newspapers circulate in the capital, and internet access is not restricted, but the reach of both is limited by poverty, illiteracy, and inadequate infrastructure.

A 2010 media bill eliminated imprisonment as a punishment for libel, slander, or insulting the president but introduced heavy fines or prison time for inciting racial and ethnic hatred and “condoning violence.” In October 2014, the HCC threatened several media outlets with sanctions for failing to adhere to professional standards, and forced a radio station to cease calls for a protest of fuel shortages gripping the country. In November, the journalist Boulga David was arrested while interviewing high school students in N’Djamena, possibly in connection with a student protest that was taking place nearby. He was beaten and interrogated for several hours before his eventual release.

Although Chad is a secular state, religion is a divisive force. Muslims, who make up slightly more than half of the population, hold a disproportionately large number of senior government posts, and some policies favor Islam in practice. At the same time, the authorities have banned Muslim groups that are seen as promoting violence. The government does not restrict academic freedom, but funds meant for the education system have reportedly been lost to corruption.

## **E. Associational and Organizational Rights: 4 / 12**

Despite the constitutional guarantee of free assembly, the authorities ban demonstrations by groups thought to be critical of the government. In November 2014, protests rocked Chad’s three largest cities—N’Djamena, Moundou, and Sarh—in response to commodity shortages, sharp increases in fuel prices, and nonpayment of public workers’ salaries. Protesters attacked state-owned vehicles and private petrol stations and marched toward government buildings before being dispersed with live fire from the police. Reports indicate that between three and five people were killed by security forces; dozens were also arrested and detained for several hours before ultimately being released.

Insecurity has severely hindered the activities of humanitarian organizations in recent years. Although the country has been relatively stable since 2011, recurrent bandit attacks on humanitarian workers make access to the population difficult.

The constitution guarantees the rights to strike and unionize, but a 2007 law imposed limits on public-sector workers’ right to strike. Nevertheless, Chad’s teacher’s union was the driving force behind the November protests and launched a concurrent strike, along with lawyers and judicial workers. In the days following the protests, the government was reported to have paid the back wages the teachers were demanding.

## **F. Rule of Law: 2 / 16**

The rule of law and the judicial system remain weak, and the political leadership heavily influences the courts. Civilian leaders do not maintain control of the security forces, which routinely ignore constitutional protections regarding search, seizure, and detention. Human rights groups credibly accuse the security forces and rebel groups of killing and torturing with impunity. Prison conditions are inhumane, and many inmates are held for years without charge. In July 2014, the union of judges and lawyers in Chad demanded the resignation of Minister of Justice Béchir Madet due to corruption accusations and the illegal release of prisoners, as well as paternalistic appointments. No action was taken by the end of the year.

Former Chadian president Hissène Habré was arrested in Senegal in 2013, where he has resided since his ouster from power in 1990. He is currently awaiting trial for war crimes committed during his rule.

In September 2014, the cabinet approved a new penal code. Although activists lauded the new code's abolition of the death penalty, they decried its criminalization of same-sex relations and heavy fines and prison terms for those convicted. Parliament had yet to ratify the penal code by year's end. Due to cultural and legal restrictions, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) citizens are forced to conceal their sexual orientation and gender identity. No nongovernmental organizations related to LGBT rights function in Chad.

Clashes have occurred between Christian farmers of the various southern ethnic groups and Muslim Arab groups living largely in the north. The influx of refugee pastoralists with their herds from neighboring states has created tension with Chadian farmers and pastoralists due to disputes over land and water resources.

Chad is home to more than 450,000 refugees that have fled conflict in recent years in neighboring CAR, South Sudan, and Nigeria. More than 100,000 refugees poured into Chad from CAR alone in 2014 as violence in that country intensified. In May, Chad closed its border with CAR, leaving many displaced persons with nowhere to go. Although it opened a corridor for refugees later in the year, the passage led to remote and isolated regions of southern Chad that were difficult for humanitarian groups to access. The government has cooperated with the United Nations and other international organizations to administer aid, but these initiatives are drastically underfunded and the majority of refugees live in dire conditions.

## **G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights: 3 / 16**

Although the constitution guarantees freedom of movement, the government restricts the movement of citizens within the country and controls the movement of both internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Government control of the economy, repression of minority rights, and lack of security in certain areas of the country also exacerbate freedom of movement, employment, and education.

Although laws establishing land and property rights are nominally in force, statutory law is functionally irrelevant to the majority of the country's population owing to the state's minimal presence in rural areas; customary and Islamic law govern land ownership and use rights in practice. Traditionally, communal land holding was common and the conveyance of land outside the community was rare. However, as environmental pressures have made agricultural and pastoral land more scarce, a market for land has emerged, largely outside the purview of the state. Owing to high levels of corruption, establishing and operating a business in Chad is extremely difficult, though in practice 80 percent of the population is employed in the informal agricultural sector.

Chadian women face widespread discrimination and violence. In the 2011 elections, 24 female members were elected to the National Assembly, or about 13 percent. Female genital mutilation is illegal but routinely practiced by several ethnic groups. Chad is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking,

and the government has not made significant efforts to eliminate the problem. The U.S. State Department again placed Chad on the Tier 2 Watch List in its 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report.

**Scoring Key: X / Y (Z)**

**X = Score Received**

**Y = Best Possible Score**

**Z = Change from Previous Year**

**[Full Methodology](#)**